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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 004831

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SUBJECT: KUWAITI WRITER AND ARTIST SAYS PM'S OCTOBER 31  
DINNER FOR WOMEN LEFT A BAD TASTE IN HER MOUTH

REF: A. KUWAIT 4729

[1](#)B. KUWAIT 2924

[1](#)C. KUWAIT 2000

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Matthew H. Tueller for reasons  
1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) During a November 20 discussion at her co-ed diwaniya, Kuwaiti writer, artist, and democracy advocate Thuraya Al-Bagsami, told PolChief that although she was thrilled to have been invited to the Prime Minister's Ramadan dinner for women, she believes the event was a publicity ploy to portray the Government as actively engaged in improving the status of Kuwaiti women (ref A). Al-Bagsami explained she was honored to have been included among one hundred women invited to a "Ghabqa," a late evening dinner during Ramadan, at Dar Salwa, Prime Minister Shaykh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's residence. She said the guests included the cream of Kuwaiti society and were hand picked by the PM's half-sister, Shaykha Amthal. Invitees, as instructed, arrived 15 minutes early in order to pass through the receiving line and greet the PM. She confirmed that the PM shook their hands, welcoming them to his home, and said the women really looked forward to discussing women's rights with the PM and assembled cabinet members. Instead, she reported that barely one hour into the event as the women sat down to dinner -- a sumptuous feast according to Al-Bagsami -- security officials told them the evening was over as the PM had another engagement. Al-Bagsami said the brusque farewell violated all Kuwaiti customs on how to treat guests and sent several women the message that the PM only cared about the photo-ops at the start of the event. She said that at the least, the PM should have excused himself and left his staff members to entertain the guests while they finished their meals.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Al-Bagsami and her husband, former Ambassador Mohammed Al-Qadiri, are vocal critics of the Government and proponents for democratic reform. It is no surprise that she found fault with the October 31 event. Nevertheless, Kuwait is an image conscious society and the indifference shown to the women is indicative of the steep climb ahead of them to prove their worth in the political arena. End Comment.

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